



Officer Kevin Weeks is presented with the award for Outstanding Police Officer, Large Department, at the 'Making A Difference Together' awards banquet, April 28, 2006 at the Marriott Buttes in Tempe. SUBMITTED BY MADD

For the Tribune

Tempe police officer dies in Loop 101 crash

By Katie McDevitt and Christian Richardson
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Tempe officer Kevin Weeks had a passion for riding his police motorcycle and arresting drunken drivers.

"He died doing what he loved to do," said Tempe police spokesman Sgt. Dan Masters.

Weeks, a 28-year-old traffic enforcement officer, died Thursday from injuries suffered when his motorcycle struck construction materials about 4:15 a.m. and crashed on southbound Loop 101, police said. He was riding his motorcycle home from work when he hit the lightrail construction materials placed off the main traffic lanes and he was thrown into a concrete barrier near Broadway Road.

Masters said Weeks used an on-ramp closed to the public but frequently used by patrol officers. The lane in which the crash occurred was separated from regular southbound lanes by the concrete barricades.

Weeks called 911 from his police radio after the crash and said he had gone down. He then told a cement truck driver who stopped to help that he was having trouble breathing, Masters said.

Paramedics took Weeks to Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn hospital, where he died. The death was the first in 20 years of an on-duty Tempe police officer, Masters said.

Weeks graduated from Chandler High School and lived in Gilbert. He is survived by a girlfriend, a sister and his parents, Masters said.

Weeks joined the Tempe department in 1999 and worked in the patrol division until June 2001, when he joined the traffic bureau. That same year, he was struck by an impaired driver while riding his motorcycle and suffered serious injuries.

But that did not stop him from doing what he loved.

"This reminds us of the risks our public safety personnel take on a daily basis," Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman said during a news conference.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving honored Weeks in April as the organization's 2005 outstanding police officer.

Sgt. John Butler, head of Tempe's DUI task force, nominated Weeks for the honor, giving Weeks credit for 282 arrests and 2,100 citations related to alcohol and drug impairment.

"He proudly wore the uniform," Masters said.

In an April 2004 letter written to Police Chief Ralph Tranter, Weeks also was commended for his participation in Tempe High School driver's education program.

"Officer Weeks is very knowledgeable on traffic laws, DUI enforcement and relates very well to the high school-aged students," wrote William Graham, director of Tempe Justice Court Teen Court.

Masters said Weeks laid his motorcycle on its side prior to the Loop 101 crash. The vehicle hit some large wooden beams that blocked the lane, and Weeks was thrown and hit the concrete barrier. Masters said darkness likely prevented Weeks from seeing the obstacles.

"Kevin was unable to avoid it, and the motorcycle collided with the material," Masters said.

The beams were intended for eventual inclusion in a platform that would aid lightrail construction crews as they bolstered the Apache Boulevard bridge.

Weeks' crash happened within a few miles of where Gilbert police officer Rob Targosz died on April 29. In that case, police arrested a man on suspicion of hit-and-run, red-light running and drunken driving. Like Weeks, Targosz was a DUI enforcement motorcycle officer.

The two fallen officers were friends. Last month, Weeks appeared on television wearing a pin with Targosz's badge number to pay tribute to his friend.

Now Weeks also will be remembered.

"He was the type of individual who had a zest for life, was passionate for what he did and cared for people," Masters said. "All of us were blessed to have known him."

Want to help?

The 100 Club has helped set up a "Survivor's Fund" to assist officer Kevin Weeks' family. The account at the Arizona Federal Credit Union is 468939, and will remain open for the next 90 days. Contributions can be made at any credit union in the state. Funeral arrangements are pending.